

OBITUARY NOTICES.

PLATE VI.¹

It is with deep regret that we have to record the loss to this Society of another of its past Presidents. It was only in the early part of last year that we had to mourn the death of Professor G. B. HOWES, and now it becomes our sad duty to chronicle that of Dr. W. T. BLANFORD, C.I.E., F.R.S., etc., who passed away on the 23rd June, 1905, aged 72.

Already several memoirs of our distinguished President have appeared in various journals; nevertheless, we feel it our duty to give some idea in these pages of the work which he accomplished, more especially in connection with the branch of science in which this Society is particularly interested.

For twenty-seven years Dr. Blanford was engaged on the Geological Survey of India, and published many valuable reports upon the work achieved during that period. Although, while in India, his official duties were in connection with geology, he still had frequent opportunities of paying attention to the zoology of that country. His memoirs treating upon both the vertebrates and invertebrates are numerous and valuable, and indispensable to the student of the Indian fauna. Perhaps no one has been so qualified to write upon the animal life of India as Dr. Blanford, for he possessed, in an exceptional degree, a great knowledge of the physical characteristics of the country. He had, to a large extent, explored the Indian Peninsula, and thus acquired a great personal acquaintance with the distribution of animal life. The results of this extensive knowledge may be seen in his classic report on "the distribution of vertebrate animals in India, Ceylon, and Burma," published in 1901.

Dr. Blanford wrote many papers on Indian mammals, birds, and reptiles, which appeared in Indian and home journals, and also wrote the account of the mammals and birds in the "Fauna of India," of which he edited the seventeen volumes which have already appeared, and, at the time of his death, he was engaged upon the volumes treating upon the land and fresh-water mollusca.

Some of the earliest work of Dr. Blanford was in connection with Indian malacology, and from the year 1860 onward a series of about forty valuable papers from his own pen, or in conjunction with his brother, H. F. Blanford, appeared in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the Annals and Magazine of Natural History, the Proceedings of the Zoological Society, the Journal de Conchyliologie, and in the Proceedings of this Society. Altogether it is estimated that Dr. Blanford wrote about 400 pages upon Indian Mollusca, besides some account of the fauna of Abyssinia and Persia, a knowledge of which he obtained, from personal observation, whilst accompanying the expeditions under Lord Napier of Magdala, and the Persian Boundary Commission.

¹ This portrait, which appeared in the Geological Magazine, 1905, dec. iv, vol. ii, has been very kindly lent, for reproduction here, by Dr. Henry Woodward, F.R.S.



G. T. Blanford



Dr. Blanford occupied many honourable positions in the scientific world, and many were the honours conferred upon him. He was twice President of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, President of the Geological Society in 1889–1890, President of the Geological Section of the British Association in 1884, President of the Malacological Society 1899–1900, etc., etc. In 1883 he was the recipient of the Wollaston Gold Medal, the highest mark of distinction at the disposal of the Geological Society; and in 1902 he received from the Royal Society, of which he had been a Fellow for many years, a royal medal in recognition of his memoir on the distribution of animals in India, and of his work in connection with the “Fauna of British India.” In 1904 the Companionship of the Order of the Indian Empire was conferred upon him by H.M. the King in recognition of his valuable services in India and of work accomplished in connection with that country since his retirement from the public service. Dr. Alcock writes in the “Records of the Geological Survey of India”:—“No notice of Blanford as a zoologist would be complete that failed to emphasize his telling personal influence and his abundant sympathy with all who were in any way interested in the natural history of this country. It seemed to be natural to apply to Blanford, and natural to Blanford to sacrifice his time to help others. No man ever showed a warmer side to the amateur, or was so entirely free from the narrow prejudice of the professional. Of liberal intellect, of just and charitable temper, he was imbued with the true scientific spirit.”

With regard to his personality we cannot do better than quote the words of his lifelong friend, Lieut.-Col. H. H. Godwin-Austen, who says:—“All must have felt the charm of his society. Besides being a naturalist he was a keen sportsman—the one often makes the other;—with gun or rod in hand no one enjoyed his day more. It is only in the life spent in camp, with its curious contrasts of pleasure and discomfort, in the hours of walking through the stubbles or standing by the covert-side, that one really gets to know all that there is of good in a friend's nature. William Blanford could enter into such pleasures, and his knowledge of nature had been increased thereby; he will be missed not only as a man of science, but as a friend by many.”

A list of Dr. Blanford's writings on Mollusca can be extracted from the catalogue of his scientific papers which appeared in the Geological Magazine, 1905, dec. v, vol. ii, pp. 9–15. We have, however, noticed the following omissions:—

- 1868. On the occurrence of *Diplommatina Huttoni* and *Eunea bicolor* in the West Indies. (Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist., 1868, vol. i, pp. 110–112.)
- 1875. Note on the Molluscan genera *Celostele*, Benson, and *Francesia*, Paladilhe, and on some species of Land Shells from Aden. (Journ. Asiatic Soc. Bengal, 1875, vol. xlv, pp. 41–46. Proceedings, 1875, p. 138.)
- 1881. Land, Fresh-water, and Estuarine Mollusca. (British Burma Gazetteer (Rangoon), 1880, vol. i, pp. 698–716.)
- 1899. On *Ariophanta Dalyi*, n subsp., from Mysore, with a note on *Mariella Dussumieri* (Val). (Proc. Malac. Soc., vol. iii, pp. 280–283.)
- 1899. Note on the Land Mollusca of Bombay. (Journ. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc., vol. xii, pp. 326–328.)
- 1901. Note on *Bensonia*, and on an apparently undescribed species, *B. mimela*. (Proc. Malac. Soc., vol. iv, pp. 178–179.)